Dear Jim, 2/17/74

In direct answer to your SLA question of 2/12/74 I am again in the position of siding with Ockie rather than ancient Chinese subtleties which I might find equisite and applicable to other situations. The simplification to which I reduce it can have several forms, the simplest he needs no warning like this. A variant is what I once heard Dean Andrews say in trying to comfort a client, "The don't hit by Western Union."

However, your inference that this group has connections I buy, with little question.

I did not follow the story in the printed press, caught what I could not avoid in electronic reporting, which was more than enough to make me wonder. My attention to TV can be closer because I do not general work at the desk to it. Instead I do such chores as wrap packages. Often the radio goes while I do other things, hoping to have attention captured by an item of particular interest.

By the acts it claims this is a terrorist not a revolutionary group. Its words mean nothing when there are acts for interpretation. But its words also can be analyzed, and this one reading tells me that it has its own jargon that is plagiarized and a rhetoric that lack reason or logic. It claims that what is without verification can be verified and then this alleged verification is Fahizah's bald allegation, no more.

Before seeing any of this I was disturbed by the Hearst kidnapping, per se and because of the overtones. Then the demands, which are clearly impossible and excessive enough to guarantee non-compliance. And contrary to Fahizah's representations, the innocent is the victim, not those to whom guilt can be attributed. If they were sincere, why didn't they nab Hearst himself?

Without doubt Fahizah's representation of her high-school thoughts of and following 1/22/63 are genuine. They are also quite common. That they come to mind today can be as easily attributed to other things as to burned-in feelings. (The outpourring here continues. Yesterday a call from an unknown woman in Maine to say that having just read the WW series she is writing Muskie and Congressman in outrage and with demands. Or, the subject is in many minds, from the young to the cops.) It is today commonly available, is often in the underground press and in some books.

However, her interpretation of the coup as to put Nixon in as dictator is both too cute and wrong. How about, the man it did put in and his policies? Accidents can explain Nixon thereafter. HHH didn't miss by that much is but one example. Or, she does not tell it as it is.

Not even in radical terms, where the difference that came with Nixon is at most in degree.

If I had to give a single opinion it would be that in some way or through some means this groups serves police interests. Fear of reaction may dominate the confused reaction of accepted radicals. The moving finger had not yet write as they have to see it. I think this is correct and requires caution.

I am prejudiced in matters like this by a long abhorenace of violence by anyone for any political reasons so my judgement may be biased. My earliest recollection of the politica means of which I approved is Carlson's account of how the Mao forces treated their Japanese and other prisoners. It was non-violent and it was political and it was constructive. So I am not impressed by the claims made for violent acts. They can be sincere and I might not credit them simply because I regard them as wrong.

In the case of SLA, which seems to have sprung from nowhere, it can't be a large force and I do not regard the acts for which it claims responsibility as in any sense revolutionary. They are inevitably unproductive, even when they can be credited with a temporary accomplishment, and the one interest they are guaranteed to serve is justification for repression.

You are correct in your comment on cyanide. I would add what the hell do they need it for and why the hell do they have it? To be sure that a missing bullet hitting the wrong target kills the innocent?

Glad to have an insight. The letter did not attract my attention if the Post used it.

Thanks, HW